1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

seem, however, to drink quite as much as the others, for as a mark of affection they will take a drink out of the *patyoot* of anybody they like or anybody who invites them. As the drinking continues voices get louder and gestures more vehement and there is a great deal of laughter; most of this laughter arises from obscene remarks which may be *double entente* or may consist merely of the Lepcha monosyllables (they are actually bi-syllables). Occasionally some rather crude and childish practical joke may be played; big leaves or some other incongruous object may be tied on to a man's pigtail while he is not looking, or the skirt of his coat hitched up behind, but these jokes are comparatively rare; the one thing which seems to the Lepchas continually and inexhaustibly funny is sex. There is a certain amount of rough sexual by-play; a young man, or occasionally a young woman, will make a gesture of grabbing at another young man's private parts; this is considered extremely funny. The bolder young men will also try to fondle the breasts of the younger married women but they are usually repulsed extremely roughly; on the whole Lepcha women have rougher and brusquer gestures than the men and it is not uncommon for a woman who is being teased to give her teaser a resounding smack on the face; this is always taken in good part. It is also quite common for a youth to hang on to the back of an older man he is fond of, putting his hands over the older man's shoulder and touching his breasts; with this gesture the youths resume the position of a child being carried on its father's back. I do not think there is any conscious homosexual intention in this behaviour; it is noticeable that it is always the younger man who clings to the back of the older and never the reverse. A somewhat parallel type of behaviour is for oldish boys round about the age of ten or twelve to put their arms round a seated older woman whom they are fond of and apply their face to her dress over the breasts; this is the type of behaviour which is abandoned 'when boys are old enough to learn shame'.

The poorer Lepcha feasts finish at nightfall; if all the provisions are finished then people go home to sleep. But the better feasts continue far into the night, and some go on into the subsequent day; a really good feast, such as the Boom Koor, lasts for three days and three nights. People doze intermittently, wherever they happen to be, but on the whole little sleep is had; under such conditions the Lepchas seem to manage with very little rest, and I have seen people after forty-eight hours almost continuous eating and drinking go off, apparently quite fresh, to work in the Fields.

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produces the result that most Lepchas have two types of behaviour; they are far more restrained in public and with strangers than they are in the privacy of their own homes. I was naturally never able to observe this, but in people's stories of their own lives there was a constant undercurrent of grumbling and scolding, particularly on the part of the women.[8] Sometimes these undercurrents came fairly near the surface in public in the guise of playful teasing. Public quarrelling of any sort is so violently disapproved of that even minor irritations and annoyances have to be repressed in public; in the home there is not the same social restraint and I have the impression that the majority of wives are given to nagging on occasion. It must be remembered that most wives are strangers to their husband's community and therefore lack the moral and emotional support of their families which is always available for the majority of the men.

The pace of Lepcha life is very leisurely; the Lepchas are never in a hurry. When they are doing something, be it work or pleasure, they like to do it thoroughly. With work as with pleasure there is no hurry or greed; everything gets done eventually, but it gets done slowly, with intervals of rest in between. The Lepchas never seem to mind waiting; often after everybody has gathered for a religious ceremony there will be a delay of several hours, while the lamas prepare the ritual objects; nobody objects to this or thinks to hurry another up; they are content to sit and wait until everything is ready. When a piece of communal work such as the repairing of a house or the building of a bridge is in progress only about half the people present are likely to be working at any one time; the others will be taking a rest, or joking, or helping to prepare the evening meal. The Lepchas work very long hours and do not grudge their labour; but they detest being ordered about and see no sense in hurry; work is a disagreeable necessity which should be made as pleasant as possible. A few state that they feel happiest after a good day's work; but for the majority the reason for work is to provide for the sensual pleasures which form the chief object of life.

Although Lepchas do not allow for quarrelling they admit bad temper to be natural, particularly if a person is hungry or if he is finding difficulties in his work. The expression of bad temper is stylised; it is called *shadong ding* and is externalised by the annoyed person breaking any of his own property which comes to hand, or

[8] Numerous examples of this occur in Book Three.

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by his hacking at a piece of wood with his knife, or by throwing stones. Even in this state nobody would destroy another's property, and only a savage foreigner like Tempa would hit or throw stones at people; but on occasion people might hit animals, or throw things at them. Normally people only beat animals if they stray into cultivated land; to hit them on any other occasion is considered cruel. *Shadong ding* is considered to be a natural and almost automatic state, like hunger; it is not caused by a supernatural and no notice is paid to a person in a temper.

Except for shame, hunger and sexual desire the Lepchas do not equate physical sensations and emotional states. Neither blushing nor fainting for emotional reasons are recognised. Squeamishness varies considerably with the individual. Some people are frightened of corpses; the Mandal was unwilling to approach the dead bodies of his first wife and of his parents. A few, such as Pembu, cannot even bear to watch a wound being dressed. Such squeamishness is considered rather stupid; and a certain admiration is expressed for those people who have the courage to rip open the corpse of a pregnant woman, and take out the foetus, which has to be done before the body is disposed of. A queasy person is not made fun of nor considered disgraced by his sensitiveness; but some admiration is felt for those people who do not manifest it, rather similar to the European admiration for a person with 'plenty of guts'.

The disgust reactions of the Lepchas are remarkably low. They will not avoid walking in human or animal excrement and will merely rub their feet on the grass if they should do so. People will clean babies often with their bare hands; and I have seen women collect the mucus from a baby with whooping cough in their hands and just rub them on the ground. They have no disgust for menstruation though they have some fear of it; if the menstrual blood falls into food or water it would be fatal to humans or animals though it nourishes fishes; a menstruating woman is not debarred from any action. After menstruation a woman will always wash both her body and her clothes, a thing which Tibetans neglect to do; the Lepchas consider, and correctly, that the Tibetans are far dirtier than they, and a number of anecdotes are told about the Tibetan lack of attention to their bodies and their various filthy, but to the Lepchas amusing, personal habits. The Lepchas themselves are extremely dirty on the whole and particularly the laymen; lamas shave and wash their heads and also their hands before making

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

796 sing-song voice. Two small boys sat beside them, and banged
● [201] drums and cymbals at intervals to mark the completion of the various parts of the service. There was another small table in front of the Dorje-Lopön and on this was placed his bell and dorje (thunderbolt). Another Lama now came and sat in front of this table. By his side was a large bowl of *chi* in which grain of various kinds floated. From time to time he dipped into this with a ladle and threw a little of the liquid away with a loud cry of *loch*. This is the common Lamaist rite of *Serkyem:* it is not peculiar to Sikkim. After perhaps twenty minutes the Lamas decided that their ministrations were sufficient, whereupon the remains of the
[781] bowl were cast unceremoniously away. All this time the spectators were paying little attention; those who were still sufficiently sober being engaged in the distribution of meat.

The stretcher containing the *Gedo* was now lifted up and placed on the altar and the large *Deu* fastened behind the central figure. Another offering, known as *Chendong*, was now brought and put down on the ground, in front of the *Gedo*. It consisted of two large copper pots (the property of the monastery), eight pieces of rather worn cloth (provided by various female Muns), and one Tibetan ceremonial scarf, the last two being arranged on top of a winnowing-tray. Later on these were carried a few yards down the road, as a symbol that the gods had accepted them, and then returned to their owners.

[788 Holy water was again sprinkled on the *Gedo*, and for a
777] moment there was a slight hiatus while one of the Lamas referred to a book to see how the ceremony should proceed. The lamps on the *Gedo* were now lighted, after which the Dorje-Lopön stood up and called upon the gods and demons to accept the offering. He also asked them to send no hail.
[788] There was another short period of chanting, after which many people gathered round the offering, picked up one of the cigar-like "wavers," touched his forehead with it and waved
[781] it over others, afterwards replacing it on the altar. As they did this the people called upon the spirits not to harm them.

1 [ie. The second Dorje-Lopön and Tapoor.--Analyst]